

TEST

Lindemann
Musicbook:
Source II & Power II

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Editor's Choice

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Lindemann Musicbook: Source II & Musicbook: Power II

COMPACT HIGH-END FOR GIGANTIC SOUND

Convert
as desired

Stylish
Hi-res Streaming
with Power

Thanks to their premium craftsmanship and neat design, those two Musicbook components offer a nice touch in a hi-fi rack and a lifestyle position.



Thanks to the screwless design and gently rounded shape, the streaming preamplifier and power amplifier look as if made of one piece.

Lindemann Musicbook: Source II & Musicbook: Power II compact high-end for gigantic sound

Having audiophile experience with little space requirement has been a challenge before. The Musicbook line-up offers a solution to this. With the Music. The premium combination of Pre-Amplifier and Power-Amplifier aims at delivering flexibility, technical aspiration and, of course, excellent sound. We took a closer look into the music library of this manufacturer.

Compact systems mean certain compromises for many. The reduced size of the device often limits its operational range. Smaller devices are also often associated with a lower price by many customers. Accordingly, manufacturers who want to follow this idea have to save on the integrated technology or manufacturing quality. Thus, high-quality compact systems are somewhat rare in the premium segment. I am a big fan of well-made components requiring little space. Especially in the streaming sector, dimensions no longer indicate the quality of a device. German audio manufacturer Lindemann seems to agree. They know how to create sophisticated compact systems. Besides the excellent Limetree series, the Musicbook components meet high-end demands. They offer performance at a reduced size. We took a closer look at the flagship models of the manufacturer.

Successful Appearance

The name Musicbook did not come out of anywhere. The two devices' dimensions and design remind of books lying flat. They measure 28 centimetres width, 22 centimetres depth and about six centimetres height and allow for simple accommodation. It is almost irrelevant whether you arrange them next to each other or stacked on top of each other. However, both are needed, as the Musicbook system works as a pre-power amplifier combination. While the Musicbook: Power II power amplifier drives the speakers, the Musicbook: Source II handles the remaining needs of a modern system. There are slight differences in design, but these do not detract from the elegant, homogeneous look of the kit. Both offer a black glass front framed by a silver aluminium cabinet. Flat surfaces prevail, while some rounded edges counteract an overly boxy design.

Approachable

The excellent build quality of both devices is immediately noticeable, resulting in a great feel. The material thicknesses are lush, the gaps are undetectable, and everything looks like made of one piece. Only the standby button at the top of the Musicbook: Source probably could go a little lower, but that's not important. Probably you will

use the flat rotary control, which protrudes slightly to the front, on the top side more often. Volume or source can be changed by turning and pressing it, and thanks to the firm fit and pleasant resistance, you can enjoy every adjustment with this knob. At the same time, the power amplifier works without any visible controls. Three small status LEDs are sufficient here as an interface between unit and user, while the Musicbook: Source conveys its information with a high-contrast OLED display. Thanks to tall symbols and letters, the display is always perfectly legible. That is even true when sitting next to the device.

Versatile

The back of the Musicbook: Source shows that compact does not necessarily mean less well-equipped. Here you find a multitude of analogue and digital connections for linking to additional devices. The integrated phono module puts a smile on the face of fans of vinyl. It resides behind one of the three RCA connections. The MM pre-amplifier builds upon the same circuitry of the popular Limetree Phono. Optical and coaxial S/PDIF inputs attach to CD transports or Smart TVs, while the USB-A port connects to external drives or mass storage devices. For our test, we received the Musicbook: Source.CD II, which comes with an internal slot-in drive. For record collectors, this solution is certainly more elegant. Casual listeners can get by without the optional extra. Today, many people will show more interest in the Bluetooth interface that, unfortunately, does not offer aptX.

Lindemann Musicbook: Source II & Power II- Stylish Hi-res Streaming with Power

As the name suggests, the Musicbook: Source II itself act as a source. The integrated streamer can access shared music from the network. It supports various formats from MP3 and FLAC to DSD. You can also use a range of online services. Besides podcasts and internet radio from Airable, Lindemann also supports listening to Qobuz, Tidal, Dee-



Model:	Lindemann Musicbook: Source II & Musicbook: Power II
Category:	Streaming-Pre-amplifier & Power amplifier
Price:	Musicbook: Source.CD II: 3,890 Euro (without CD: 3,590 Euro) Musicbook: Power 1000 II: 3,590 Euro (Power 500 II: 2,690 Euro)
Warranty:	2 years (3 years after registration)
Finish:	Silver
Manufacturer:	Lindemann Audiotechnik, Wörthsee 08153 9533390 www.lindemann-audio.de

Dimensions (H x W x D):	Source II: 63 x 280 x 220 mm Power II: 63 x 280 x 220 mm
Weight:	Source II: 2.6 kg Power II: 3.4 kg
Inputs Musicbook: Source II:	1 x Ethernet 1 x Toslink optical 1 x S/PDIF coax 1 x USB-A 3 x Cinch Stereo (1 x Phono MM) 1 x CD (only Source.CD) - Wi-Fi - Bluetooth
Outputs Musicbook: Source II:	1 x XLR Stereo 1 x RCA Stereo 1 x 6,3 mm Headphone jack
Inputs Musicbook: Power II:	1 x XLR Stereo
Outputs Musicbook: Power II:	1 x Loudspeakers Stereo
Power:	2 x 500 watts /4 Ohms (only Power 1000, manufacturer information)
Supported formats:	MP3, AAC, OGG; WMA, ALAC, FLAC, AIFF, WAV, DSD
Supported bitrates:	PCM: up to 384 kHz, 24 bits DSD: up to DSD256, 11,2 MHz, 1 bit

Score

Total Score:	Editor's Choice
Class:	Reference Class
Price / Performance:	very good



By integrating a phono module, vinyl fans can also keep their system slim. Thanks to variable analogue outputs, the Musicbook: Source effortlessly drives active speakers.



A small lever allows for switching the Musicbook in bi-amplified mode. A small rotary control next to the XLR sockets adjusts the bass level.



The slot for the optical drive of the Musicbook: Source.CD is almost unnoticeable in the front. Headfilers can also look forward to a headphone amplifier with class-A circuitry.

zer and Highresaudio, as well as Spotify Connect. Almost unusual for a modern compact system, the Musicbook allows for both WLAN and wired network connection. Often one of those interfaces are omitted for reasons of space or cost. The musicbook: Power II does not quite keep up with the functional diversity of the Source, but the power amplifier also has some appealing surprises in store.

Versatile Powerhouse

Musicbook: Source and Power connect via a balanced cable. Although the source device has both an RCA and an XLR output, the power amplifier is limited to a single type of transfer. Speakers connect via a pair of outlets for 4-millimetre-diameter laboratory connectors on the back of the unit. Admittedly, these are less elegant than large terminals, but they help to keep the dimensions small. Even with quite hefty cables, everything stayed in place here. So far, the Musicbook: Power is very similar to other power amplifiers. However, what makes it outstanding, is that the power amplifier can work in either stereo or mono operation. You can change the mode with a small slider to make the outputs work bi-amping. In this case, the left speaker connection is responsible for the treble and mid cabinets, while the right one operates the bass drivers.

Green Energy

To achieve a match with the speakers, you can adjust the low-frequency level. A small rotary control next to the XLR sockets offers a boost of three decibels or a cut of six decibels. The amount of power ultimately applied to the outputs depends on the model of Musicbook Power II selected: Lindemann offers either the model 500 delivering 2 x 250 watts or the model 1000 we tested with 2 x 500 watts at four ohms. That's a lot of power in a small package that you can use to drive speakers of practically any type and size. Apart from these performance values, the Musicbook: Power 1000 II does not act as a merciless power guzzler. Thanks to the high efficiency of the intricately designed Class D circuitry, the power amplifier consumes somewhat little energy when operating in normal mode. The automatic switch-on and switch-off help save additional electricity.

Quick Networking

Once the source device and the amplifier are connected, the only thing left is to set up the network. Plugging the network cable is sufficient. WLAN also is ready within a few moments using WPS. However, you can also achieve this manually in the free Lindemann App, which allows the operation of the Musicbook: Source. In addition to controlling the streamer, you can change all other devices' features. These include, for example, source selection, adjusting the display brightness, or the mode of operation of the digital-to-analogue converter. The application also integrates streaming services. If you own several Lindemann devices, you can combine them to form a multi-room system. As an alternative to using the app. You can also use Roon. For me, it is enough to enter the Wi-Fi access data and connect my Qobuz account to make the compact combination ready for use in just a few minutes.

Digital Delicatessen Section

But first, the smartphone goes back to my pocket because I feed the CD drive of the Musicbook: Source with the "Ärzte Unplugged" album "Rock 'n' Roll Realschule". The transparent and open sound character of the combination is immediately noticeable. The acoustic instruments of the band and the supporting Hamburg school orchestra sound pleasantly direct and differentiated from the connected floor-standing speakers. The wonderfully dark background has a not inconsiderable share in this. To achieve this sound, Lindemann invests a great deal of technical effort. Instead of one, two high-quality DAC chips from AKM convert the signals. One for each channel and with support for PCM signals up to 384 kilohertz and DSD256. A clock that is accurate to the femtosecond drives them. The combination with the sophisticated power supply suppresses noise and hiss in the signal in the best possible way.

Convert as desired

But that's not enough magic in the digital section. Lindemann leaves it up to the user to choose the mode of operation of the converter unit. Choose between "normal" PCM processing and DSD resampling in the device menu. In this case, all current signals are up-sampled to a bitstream with 256 times the CD quality. Although this does not add any information, resampling can further minimise interference. After switching to DSD mode, the Musicbook: Source rewarded my choice with an even more transparent, dynamic sound. The reproduction seems to gain presence. That wonderfully matches the finely defined harp playing and the energetic guitar strokes in "Ignorama". In addition, the plausible positioning works perfectly for the concert recording. On the left side of the stage, the school choir goes back and forth. The brass on the right adds an exquisite sense of space.

Total Control

After listening to the CD, I continue with streaming. So I reach for my smartphone and the Lindemann app. While I call up the EP "The Last of Us Part II - Covers and Rarities" via Qobuz, I look around for more music. I quickly notice how intuitive the Musicbook is to use. The app is well-organised and nonetheless appealingly designed. The main screen lists all playback options. Even from lower levels of the menu, a home button in the top right-hand corner allows, to quickly return to the main screen. The bottom of the screen shows the music in progress, so it is always within reach. On the playback screen, you can swipe instantly to the queue. Although, the finger recognition for volume control could be a little more generous. On the other hand, the app shines with its responsiveness. After opening the app, it reconnects in a flash and quickly carries out all inputs.

Sound by the Book

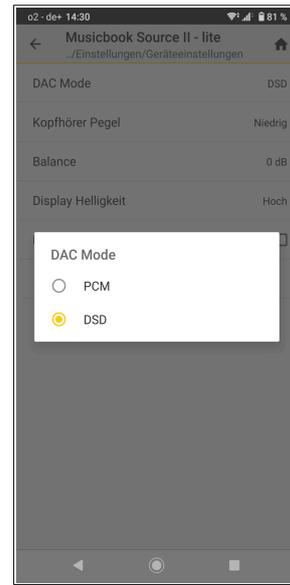
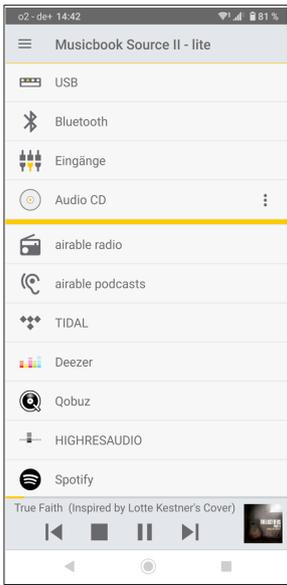
If you have never had contact with a streaming app before, this is an excellent introduction. Quickly accessible, reasonably comprehensive and attractively designed, it matches the high standards of the devices themselves. Meanwhile, they continue impressing me with their great sound. In her version of "True Faith," Ashley Johnson's vocals deliver volume and charisma. Here and there, even the slight tremor in the voice during the emotional tracks of the EP becomes noticeable. The acoustic guitar opposes an immensely dark background and plays with an enjoyable physicality. The Musicbook combination plays at an absolute top level. There is no sharpness but excellent plasticity and breathtaking authenticity. It does not remind me of the "digital" sound of many compact systems. The source and the power amplifier are tonally neutral and produce a wonderfully realistic and musical sound. Nothing appears to separate the device from the listener. That is fantastic.



With the generous power reserves of the amplifier, it can drive even massive floor-standing speakers. The amplifier always retains control over the drivers.

Library of beautiful sounds

We continue with a seasonally convenient excursion into classical music. With Bach's Christmas Oratorio, the Musicbooks create a little Christmas spirit. Once again, they do an excellent job. The stage seems to project eerily deep into the room. Choirs build up large in front of gentle organ playing. The flutes seem light and airy, while the soloists notably are rendered wonderfully direct and emotional. Thanks to the distinguished transparency, each of the many details becomes apparent. The change to nimble jazz also causes no problems whatsoever. Accurate and rich, the power amp pushes the nimbly plucked bass into the listening area. Lively and with a natural timbre, the recording quickly carries me away. The journey through the various musical genres is effortless, and the Source II and Power II always remain unagitated. But I am only fully convinced by devices when they strike the right tone on my individually beloved albums.



The orderly designed interface of the Lindemann app offers even streaming beginners an uncomplicated introduction. Furthermore, the programme scores points with its speedy responsiveness.

Easy Play

So finally, the CD rip of "Songs for the Deaf" makes its way into the playlist. Powerful, embodied bass pours into the room from the background, while Dave Grohl's drums hit their mark with crashing dynamics. Propelled by Dean Ween's gripping guitar riffs, Josh Homme launches into the first lines of "No One Knows". Instantly, the track from Queens of the Stone Age feels wonderfully free, open and light-hearted. The instruments have a solid sound, the power amp delivers the necessary pressure and keeps perfect control over the drivers of the loudspeakers. You get the full punch, detail and richness that the songs need without a single oversupply. The ease with which the Musicbooks manage this spectacle leaves me almost a little stunned. Throughout the album, the playing seems wonderfully vibrant. The percussion is bristling with power yet doesn't dominate in a threatening fashion.

Rediscovery

Several times I reach for the remote control in the hope to notice even more by increasing the sound pressure. The analogue volume control of the Musicbook: Source and the power of the wonderfully unagitated Musicbook: Power harmonise excellently together. Thanks to the excellent delivery, the timing is always on point. As the album finishes with the title "Song for the Deaf", the combination still surprises with its seemingly merciless drive. While the gently grooving bassline provides the foundation, the short guitar repeatedly throws the guitar riffs vigorously into the room. Drums accompany both and set additional accents by adding a lot of dynamics. I have heard the album endlessly, but it feels like the first time I heard it, sounding so liberated, consistent and convincing.



The slim remote control is a brilliant addition to the app. You can also use functions such as skipping tracks when streaming.

Conclusion

Musicbook: Source II and Power II stand in a class of their own. Lindemann's compact high-end systems meet the highest demands, whether in technology, design or craftsmanship. The streaming preamplifier and the power amplifier offer great versatility and plenty of power in a small cabinet. That in itself makes them worthy of a recommendation. But it is their excellent sound that outshines most other compact systems. Such definition, dynamics and musicality, presented with great ease, are a breathtaking experience that fascinates all over the board.

*Test & Text: Philipp Schneckenburger
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